

Legal Business Development: It Starts At The Top.

July 26, 2011 by [Paula Black](#)

Imagine taking on one of the most difficult positions of your career and having someone whisper in your ear... sage advice as you begin your journey. That is exactly what happened in Chicago last week for several new managing partners.

Last Thursday I participated in a program [The Managing Partner Forum](#) put on in Chicago... [Master Class: The First 100 Days](#). The program is exclusively for new managing partners in law firms with 40 or more lawyers. It was an extremely informative, practical and inspiring program given by [Patrick McKenna](#), a law management practice expert and [Brian Burke](#), former Managing Partner at Baker Daniels. The purpose of the program is to give managing partners a solid foundation that will ensure success early on in one's service as managing partner. One of the attendees brought his new COO... imagine how beneficial that will prove to be down the road!

The dynamic duo addressed those unspoken concerns most new Managing Partners have and here are three that any lawyer can relate to...

- How will I manage the competing demands of work and home?
- After years of career success, is this the one I'm going to fail at?
- Will I be able to satisfy my partners' expectations?

Their advice is relevant for anyone who is taking on a new position, new initiative or simply trying to improve in your current position.

The advice...

Listen, listen and listen! Ask probing questions... then figure out what the person is really trying to communicate. It's not easy, but if you don't listen first, you will never get to the core of what someone is thinking.

You cannot communicate enough! REPEAT your message often and in a variety of ways... email, memos and face to face. And when you think it is clear... do it again, because it most likely isn't.

Have a vision vs. aspirations. And that vision should be simple clear and easy to communicate. Brian recommends that if it can't be said in one concise sentence and fit on a 3x5 card... it needs work.

This applies to all of us who are growing a firm OR a book of business.

Pearl of Wisdom: Want more on the subject? You are in luck... **McKenna and Burke** have a new book out... [Serving At The Pleasure Of My Partners: Advice to the new firm leader.](#)

In Black & White

COMMON SENSE STRATEGIES FOR GROWING YOUR LEGAL PRACTICE



Paula Black is a legal branding expert, author, consultant and coach. She has advised individual lawyers and law firms around the globe on everything from powerful and innovative design to marketing strategy and business development. She is the award-winning author of "The Little Black Book on Law Firm Branding & Positioning," "The Little Black Book on Law Firm Marketing and Business Development," and the Amazon-bestselling "The Little Black Book: A Lawyer's Guide To Creating A Marketing Habit in 21 Days."

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